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HARPSICHORD

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The International Harpsichord Society is a nonincorporated, non-profit organization of harpsichord, clavichord and baroque music enthusiasts who are dedicated to the development and preservation of the instruments and music of the baroque period. Membership in the Society includes a year's subscription to *THE HARPSICHORD*, eligibility to serve as a local, national or international officer or board member as well as participation in all regular Society activities. The entire range of memberships follows:

Dues are for a one year period.	
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Requests for membership or additional information may be sent to International Harpsichord Society, P. O. Box 9287, Denver, Colorado 80209.

THE COVER

Ed Golikoff adapted our cover art from a watercolor reproduction of an unknown artist. It whimsically depicts an elegant harpsichord and an equally elegant harpsichordist from out of the past.

Through the cooperation of Production Associates of Denver (for whom Ed did the original drawing) this illustration is available to members as a French fold Seasons Greetings and New Years card at \$3.50 a dozen (including mailing.) All profits are being donated to the Society by Production Associates.

The card measures 3¾ x 7¾ inches and is printed in burgundy ink on eggshell stock. The inside of the card contains a chubby cherub and the message "May All The Joy That Is Music Be With You This Holiday Season And In The New Year."

The cards are available only to Society members. ☺

GO FOR BAROQUE

by Hal Haney



It is a pleasure to report that our "Who's Who" of the harpsichord world is progressing very well. Several hundred completed forms have been received so far, and new ones appear at *The Harpsichord* office daily.

Our 13th question on the form asked for suggestions and most of our members (bless them) spent extra time and effort on this one. We have not had time to tabulate all the suggestions yet, but they will be a great help to the Society for years to come.

You will receive this issue a little later than usual for two reasons.

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SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS

The Question of Plywood

by Wallace Zuckermann

You last found me in the midst of an Italian restoration, but I will keep you in suspense about the outcome of that, since I am currently working on another Italian instrument. When that is done I'd like to report on voicing with quill.



Recently I received a complaining letter from a kit builder who had just finished a clavichord. He was unhappy about the lack of volume and tone in his treble, and willy-nilly blamed this on the soundboard supplied. He wrote: "You should have used solid spruce; you use plywood because it is cheap and handy."

The soundboard is usually the first thing people will blame if something has gone wrong with the tone. It is an obvious culprit: sound-board, the board which produces the sound.

However, all indications are that the material of the soundboard is not nearly as important as it is generally held to be; the old makers considered the soundboard thickness tapering their real secret rather than the material itself. And even those items are only a small portion of all the factors bearing upon the tone in a harpsichord or clavichord.

Many piano makers have used plywood for years without their tone suffering notably. Challis is using metal soundboards in his harpsichords and gets at least as acceptable a tone as he did with solid spruce. To compare the sound of solid spruce and a laminated board in two very similar instruments will not tell the whole

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story, since no two instruments sound exactly alike. Therefore, I was pleased when I recently had the chance to try the two different boards in the identical instrument.

This was a clavichord we had built in the shop, and at the customer's request installed a solid spruce soundboard, $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. The clavichord went to an extremely humid place in the country, and after one year, the soundboard had warped so badly that it had to be removed. We now replaced it with a 3-layer laminated basswood board, also $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. Everyone who heard the clavichord "before and after" agreed that the laminated board produced a louder, clearer tone with more definition.

Many theories to explain this could be advanced, among them the thought that a stiffer board, such as plywood, may favor a more sustaining tone. However, before jumping to conclusions, one should perhaps consider the quality or type of instrument in which such an experiment is performed. It is possible that in a close copy of a fine, old clavichord (which mine wasn't) the plywood board would have acted to detract from the tone. Instead of jumping to any conclusions, we may make two general observations: (1) The production of tone in an instrument is affected by a host of factors, many of which do their best to defy analysis; and (2) far from being "wrong," plywood soundboards will usually produce at least an acceptable tone, and often an excellent one.

Note: A publisher has commissioned me to write a book on the modern harpsichord, and I would like to include all professional makers of which I have already uncovered some six dozen. If any reader knows of a professional harpsichord maker (other than the well-known ones) I would appreciate this information. (Please write to me in care of Zuckermann Harpsichord, 115 Christopher Street, New York, N. Y. 10014.)

May June July 1969

HARPSICHORD DEGREE PROGRAM NOW AVAILABLE

The Cleveland Institute of Music (Dr. Victor Babin, Director; Mr. William Kurzban, Dean), in cooperation with Case Western Reserve University (Dr. John Suess, Chairman, Music Dept.), has just announced an undergraduate and graduate harpsichord major leading to a Bachelor or Master of Music degree.

There are two harpsichords available at The Institute for performance and practice purposes: a Dowd and a Sperrhake. Case Western Reserve University has one concert Dowd harpsichord. The CIM Library has an out-

standing collection of books, music and recordings of particular interest to the harpsichord student. Performance experience is gained in solo recitals and chamber music performances, in the regular student recitals and, with the new Collegium Musicum established in 1968 under a grant from the Kulas Foundation. An exceptional collection of Renaissance and Baroque instruments is available for student use.

Scholarship auditions are held in May and are effective the following September. More than 40 music scholarships are available. Complete information is available in the CIM catalogue.

Doris Ornstein, teacher of harpsichord for The Institute and the CWRU Music Department is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music. She studied piano with Lonnie Epstein, flute with Frederick Wilkins, and composition with Suzanne Bloch. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Bennington College in 1951 and attended Trinity College of Music in London where she studied harpsichord and virginals with Christopher Wood. She also attended the University of Illinois to study harpsichord with George Hunter and Mannes College of Music for harpsichord, and master classes in keyboard literature with Sylvia Marlowe. She was the recipient of the Presser Foundation Award, Bennington College, for 1949-50 and 1950-51 and the Harpsichord Music Society Scholarship for study with Sylvia Marlowe, New York, 1961-62. She was appointed to the CIM faculty in September, 1968. Miss Ornstein is also a valued member of our International Harpsichord Society.

The Cleveland Institute of Music catalogue is available by writing to the Institute at 11021 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. ☺

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The International Society of Harpsichord Builders is proud to give special recognition to the following Contributing Members whose interest and generosity aid materially in the development and preservation of the instruments and music of the baroque period and assists in furthering the various projects and programs of the Society.

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CONVERSATION

with Igor Kipnis,
Harpsichordist

Igor Kipnis is one of the most widely recognized harpsichordists appearing today. His recitals are anxiously awaited by music lovers on many continents. He has recorded for eight recording companies, working with such notables as Leopold Stokowski, Neville Marriner and Seiji Ozawa. He recorded an album of scatological canons and songs with the chorus directed by Norman Luboff called "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is a Dirty Old Man."

Igor Kipnis is the son of the famous Metropolitan Opera basso, Alexander Kipnis. He received his first piano lessons from his grandfather, Chicago composer and pianist Henriot Levy. He has appeared with many leading symphony orchestras working with such distinguished conductors as Erich Leinsdorf, Charles Munch and Alfred Wallenstein. He is currently engaged in a project for Epic Records featuring the harpsichord music of various countries. During the summer he serves as Chairman of the Baroque Department at the Berkshire Music Festival (Tanglewood.) He is a contributing editor and reviewer for Hi-Fi/Stereo Review and serves as host for his own radio program "The Age of Baroque" broadcast weekly over the New York Times Station W.Q.X.R. He is a charter member of ISHB.

This conversation took place late one afternoon in his Greenwich Village apartment which is shared by his young family, an active cat and a beautiful harpsichord and clavichord built by Rutkowski and Robinette of New York. Mr. Kipnis has just been asked how he developed his interest in harpsichords.

KIPNIS: "I have always been a record collector. Even as a youngster I had a fair collection of keyboard disks in general. Most of them are still with me as you can see. I have always been very fond of piano music.

Back during the early 40's I was studying piano without any intent of becoming professional but it was something I rather enjoyed. My uncle gave me my first harpsichord records. They were Victor recordings of Landowska's Goldberg variations. This was really my first taste of the harpsichord. I was not particularly struck with it yet, on the other hand, I listened to it and gradually I became more familiar with the music and my interest in it increased.

"Later, in college, I was involved to a great extent with musical affairs. I didn't major in music although I started out that way. In my last year my wife-to-be and I were taking a course under Randall Thompson called 'The Age of Handel' which was a very stimulating course. We had various projects to do and we asked if we could play some of the Fitzwilliam Sonatas. My wife played the recorder and I 'fiddled' at the piano so we thought that here was a good chance to try a harpsichord.

"The Harvard Music Department had a Chickering which was built by Dolmetsch in the very early part of this century. It was in wretched condition but at least some of it was playable. That was my first introduction to a real-live harpsichord.

"I received special permission to use it for our class and we performed a couple of the Fitzwilliam Sonatas. Incidentally, they were edited by Thurston Dart. Later, Dart was to become a very great influence on me although I didn't know it at that time.

"After that, I went into the Army, came out, looked around for work and did a number of very curious things. I sold books and records for Doubleday, worked for Radio WMCA a pop music station and worked for Westminster Records for four and a half years as Art and Editorial Director. It was there that I first met Valenti. Valenti has always been very

friendly and this was my first relation with a real, live harpsichordist. I went to some of his recording sessions and enjoyed them very much. It was then that I thought that it would be very nice if my wife and I could have a harpsichord rather than a piano. At that time we didn't have a keyboard instrument around.

"In 1956 my parents went to Europe and they asked me just before they left if there was anything I would like for them to bring back with them.

"I said; 'Yes, a harpsichord!'

"We all had a very good laugh about that, for they thought I was completely out of my mind. They did not come back with a harpsichord, I must say, but they did come back with a number of catalogues. My father thought I really should have some sort of a keyboard instrument to keep me happy after work. In other words, television was not quite enough.

We looked at the catalogues and finally decided on a two manual Sperrhake. That arrived about nine months later and was my first harpsichord.

"I started fooling around with it purely for my own pleasure and began to practice quite hard, but again, with nothing in mind for a profession.

"One of the jobs that I had at Westminster, (which was a self-imposed job,) was to promote Westminster records on the radio stations in New York City by taking some of the programming personnel out to lunch. The fellow from WNYC knew that I played the harpsichord, but that this was only in the privacy of the home. Sometimes we would have a few professionals drop by but it was more a free jam session type of thing. He suggested that I might be interested in doing a program. I thought this over and decided that it would be an interesting thing to do.

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A kind Westminster engineer consented to do the taping at my home since WNYC was not going to pay for transporting my harpsichord to the studios.

"One fine day, in the middle of winter, we taped a half an hour show. We rolled up the rugs, turned off the heater because of the knocking which was prevalent at that time, and in that colossal chill, I started in. That first effort was broadcast in 1959 and that could be called my official debut.

"Then one thing led to another. A few people had heard the broadcast and commented on it. I got to play the Fifth Brandenburg with the Greenwich Village Symphony and that was my live debut.

"I was still doing many other things. I worked for a chain of F.M. stations and somehow the boat really sank with that company. Actually, I should precede that with the fact that Westminster went bankrupt also, but that was two months *after* I left so that had nothing to do with me. The chain of F.M. stations wanted me to go to Washington state and I told them that that was ridiculous, or words to that effect. I was doing more and more playing in New York and as much as I like Washington, New York was the center of all my activities. So I found myself without a job.

"What was I to do? Try to find a regular job, or go free lance?

"I decided to go free lance.

"I started writing record reviews for Hi-Fi/Stereo, which I still do. I also started writing concert reviews for the now defunct New York Herald Tribune. I was there for a year when suddenly I found myself being

reviewed in print by other people who reviewed my live concerts. Summer came and went, the usual dry season and when Fall arrived and musical activity started again no one said anything to me about doing reviews again. I began to wonder what was wrong, especially since I noticed that some of my other colleagues were starting in with the regular Fall season. I asked the Music Editor what was wrong. He told me that 'the people upstairs' noticed that my name was appearing in reviews as well as at the end of reviews. Not at the same time, of course, but they wanted to know whether I was playing or reviewing. I thought I had been doing a little bit of both, but they didn't care for that and I had to quit. This wasn't really serious since I did a lot of hack work writing program notes, jacket notes for records and things of that sort.

"At this point I took another good look at my situation. I had given some thoughts about becoming a professional for I had already made some recordings, although not solo.

"In January 1962 I made my recital debut. At the same time I got my first contract with a small record-company called Golden Press which was a God-send. The one thing I think necessary today, if you plan to make any kind of career on any instrument, whether you are playing harpsichord or the kazoo, you have to have records. Without them you don't stand a chance. Here I was given an opportunity to make two solo records. I think I was a little out of my mind at the time, but I didn't know any better. I made two records in the space of two days. Each record was

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about forty minutes of music. One was an all Bach collection. The other was a Handel Fifth Suite, the Soler Fandango, some Bach and a number by Dussek: The Sufferings of the Queen of France, which is a piece I dug up. It is a great programmatic thing if not particularly great piece of music. It took them two years to release the records. They kept saying business was bad. Business is always bad in the record world. There doesn't ever seem to be a good time of year . . . unless of course you have the field cornered.

"I was doing more and more continuo work both on records and live performances. I now had a manager and things have been going up ever since.

"A year ago I went to Europe for the first time. I received a Martha Beard Rockefeller Grant because going to Europe is expensive, even if you are just going by yourself for fun. If you want to take a harpsichord along with you it becomes even more expensive. I decided I would really prefer playing on my own instrument so I took it over to Europe by boat, in my own car and then rode all around Europe."

THE HARPSICHORD: *This is rather unique. Most harpsichordists usually use the instrument which is available.*

KIPNIS: "There is a choice that I think every harpsichordist must make if he wants to play the instrument at all. He can play whatever happens to be around, in which case he's subject to whatever condition that instrument is in . . . and some of them are pretty impossible. Or he

can carry his own instrument. I think there is another problem. There are some people who adapt very easily to all kinds of instruments. They can play the piano and a minute later play the harpsichord and a minute later play the clavichord. Some people have that sort of technique. I'm not entirely sure whether they sound well on all three, or four, or five or whatever it is, but they are able to adapt themselves very easily. There are others, rather more like myself, who will find themselves a little uncomfortable with an instrument alien to them, and I even think with the same make instrument but with a different disposition. This can throw you very easily.

"There is one other solution. You can ship your instrument by railway express, air, truck or some such transportation. However, the problem there is that sometimes the instrument does not arrive on time. I've heard all sorts of horror stories from professional harpsichordists about their instruments not arriving on time. They finally wind up doing the recital on the piano! This has happened more often than any of us would like to believe.

"I have a very good instrument, one built by Rutkowski and Robinette, and I prefer taking it around. I know what the instrument does. Recitals in general are not easy to play. That includes any instrument or voice. There are always problems with new halls and new audiences. So at least if you have one thing that is common to all of these . . . namely the instrument . . . that's one advantage."

HARPSICHORD: *Have you experienced any difficulties with either weather conditions or customs?*

KIPNIS: "I've had very, very few difficulties with weather conditions, temperature or anything. This is mainly because the instrument itself is very, very stable. I do have to make sure that I arrive for a concert no less than five hours before the concert and preferably I like to arrive the day ahead. That means I can get the instrument in the hall. Once the instrument is in place, I can go to a movie, have a leisurely dinner and be on my own. Also, the instrument has a chance to settle. I find in general, no matter what the temperature, the instrument must adjust to the new surroundings. And sometimes it takes a little longer than at other times. I remember once in Minneapolis, the harpsichord was outside in the station wagon all night with the temperature at 14 below zero! It was a very scary situation. However, the next day the instrument was just fine. In fact, it was in good enough tune that I was able to practice. Of course it was necessary for me to tune before the concert.

"While in Europe I was a little apprehensive about the problem of riding with the instrument across various borders. And I did have a few heart arresting experiences. One was when I went from England to Holland. The customs people looked at the instrument and then at me. I don't think that they entirely knew what it was. I had a piece of paper which was supplied by my manager in Amsterdam. They looked at the paper and that only made things worse. Finally, I found out (after having been detained there for about

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half an hour) that I didn't really need the paper, so they tore it up in front of my eyes. Good Lord, I thought. What if I needed the paper later to get out of the country? But nothing happened. I was not questioned again.

"There was another time when I was crossing from Austria into Germany. I was stopped by the guard who peered in the windows of my station wagon. He didn't say a thing about the harpsichord. He looked at the license plate and then informed me that the number of my registration card was not the same as the license plate number. Well of course not! The license plate number is not the same as the vehicle identification number. That took another five minutes. I discovered that they were very fussy at the Swiss-French border. Had I not had a piece of paper showing that I played on a Swiss radio station, I would not have been able to get out. Of course this is just one of the problems of the harpsichordist.

"I think that there are a lot of people who are fascinated by the harpsichord and decided to obtain an instrument for themselves . . . then find there are problems. One of these problems is learning how to tune it. They don't stop to think about that. They think first of what a wonderful sound it is. One must learn to tune, or you must buy an electrical gadget or something of the sort. There are many different ways.

"Rather more difficult is sitting down at the instrument and learning how to make the thing sound. That is not easy. I think the most important thing in learning to play the harpsichord is getting the instrument to sing. This takes keyboard control and it requires a lot of hard work. There is no cure-all to this. It is helpful to listen to many different harpsichordists and hear the different ways in which harpsichordists play. And they are all very different from each other. Pay as little attention as possible to sound effects . . . to changes in registration. That's the floss . . . the color of the car. The important thing is

what makes the engine run."

HARPSICHORD: *What are your concepts of programming?*

KIPNIS: "I was taught a long time ago by Thurston Dart who looked at my first recital program. I remember that I wanted to play a Toccata. He said that the one I selected was a great piece but it should not be the first piece one puts on a program.

"The first piece is a 'throw-away' piece. You have to get limbered up a bit. Secondly, and very important, the audience has to get used to the harpsichord sound. It makes no difference whether the audience is harpsichord conscious or not. You can throw away your first five, six or seven minutes. Then you can build. I like to contrast very much. There is nothing wrong with playing an all English program. I've done that quite a lot, but you have to jump around a little bit. Audiences are not specialists. Specialists can take a whole evening, for example, of Elizabethan music. I would love it. But most audiences will get much more out of both the instrument and the music if you jump around a little. My own tastes are, I think, fairly wide. I play a wide range of music, including contemporary music.

"I also like to stretch the harpsichord as far as it will go. To play up until the end of the 18th century is treading on slightly dangerous ground I know. Some people will say that one never plays Mozart on the harpsichord. This is, I think, sort of a hindsight angle.

"Mozart certainly played the harpsichord. He also played the clavichord a great deal. In fact, a lot of Mozart sounds extremely well on the clavichord. Much better than on the harpsichord.

"The point is, does the music sound? Is it effective on the harpsichord? Can you make it do what it is supposed to do? If the answer is negative, then you leave it alone! I've just recorded a harpsichord concerto of Mozart's, the E flat, K271. Everyone I've mentioned that to says that it was a piano concerto. In a way,

they are right, because everybody today plays it on the piano. I claim that, from an historical standpoint, it was commissioned for a French keyboard player. This was one of the few Mozart commissions. The harpsichord lasted the longest in France. The French lady who commissioned the work was obviously a harpsichordist. There was no question about that. She was a traveling virtuoso, but other than that we don't know too much about her. She asked Mozart for a concerto and he wrote a piece which is not too far different from the concertos he was writing for a different instrument.

"I think there is too much of a tendency anyway to separate the idea of the Fortepiano and harpsichord. They were very close. I decided that the Mozart E flat concerto was for the harpsichord. It sounds very well on the harpsichord so I play it on the harpsichord. In addition to the recording I will play it three times with orchestra. One of those performances will be in London."

HARPSICHORD: *This brings us to the subject of old versus new instruments. Do you prefer a harpsichord based on the early instrument or do you like the modern registers which are now available?*

KIPNIS: "This is a very difficult question to answer because you always offend somebody no matter how you try to answer it. From a performing standpoint, if you are going to be playing only the music written for harpsichord before 1750, in most cases, you can do very nicely on a small one-stringed instrument. There are a few, of course, which require two manuals; Couperin, Bach, the Italian Concerto and pieces of that sort. For the larger instrument, I think three sets of strings will do very nicely with hand stops. In a way this is very good, at least you know what you can do and what you can't do.

"The whole modern concept of harpsichord registration is something we have to lay at Landowska's door-

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step. It is very bad and it gives young people the wrong impression of what harpsichords are all about.

"As many tone colors as possible is not the be-all and end-all of harpsichords. You should be able to affect what you have to affect mostly, if not exclusively, through the fingers.

"When it comes down to pedals, you have machine stops toward the end of the 18th century which get fancier and more complicated. I had a chance to try Haydn's harpsichord in Vienna when I was there last fall. That has many effects on it. This is a big instrument and it has the Venetian Swell. It was fun to play and also, to my great surprise, to learn what you can achieve by means of the pedals. Getting one register out of the way and throwing in another one can be negotiated very easily and with different effects. So, toward the end of the century, a lot more was possible. Because of this, I wouldn't say to throw out the pedals and only have hand stops unless you only wanted to play music which was written before the machine stops.

"I think it is very important for a professional harpsichordist not to restrict himself simply to music of an earlier day. It makes for better programming. In addition, I think it is somewhat of a duty to play at least some contemporary compositions assuming that the artist likes it and feels he can do something with it. Then, one must have an instrument which is capable of all kinds of register shifts. So you really do need the pedals.

"What I think is sad, is to use the very elaborate registrations and elaborate registration changes on early music which was obviously quite impossible at the time the music was written. You are very much on your own. Do you want to be a purist about this or do you want to be somebody who is very much a modernist and anything goes? You take your pick."

HARPSICHORD: Do you select the numbers you record or does the recording company select numbers for you?

KIPNIS: "In a few cases the recording company does request certain numbers. I have been very fortunate with C.B.S. in that I have had whole choice on all the numbers I have played. The whole idea of the so-called 'country' series that I have been doing came about really by accident. I received a contract from them to make a minimum of one record a year in 1964 which came just as I was on my way to Tanglewood for my first summer's teaching there. It was a question of what was I going to put together for a record which had to be done in a rush. It turned out to be an all French program. From then on, it was quite easy in trying to figure out what other countries could be involved. And, of course, there is always a volume two of the ones I have already done. There was the French one, English, Italian, Spanish, German and also in the ice box in an Austrian program with both harpsichord and clavichord.

"One suggestion they had was for a 'pot-boiler' album. This was something I didn't particularly care for. Everybody plays the *Turkish Rondo*, you name it. Everybody plays all the pop pieces. But the more I thought about it I realized that it might be fun to do. So I recorded that last spring. I had 20 pieces ranging from the Elizabethan school, including even a version of *Green Sleeves* up to the Beethoven: *Minuet in G*."

HARPSICHORD: Are you generally satisfied with what comes off the record and, how much editing is done on your recordings?

KIPNIS: "To get at the first question, in general I am quite satisfied with the way they have recorded me. There is a tendency on the part of most record companies to press a rather loud record and over modulate. This is nothing you can blame on any one person or one recording company. They all seem to do it. However, with certain types of playback systems, it does not sound too badly, that is if you don't play it at the volume level of a Bruchner symphony. And many people do.

"The corollary of that is that

people hearing a harpsichord live in a hall for the first time are very disappointed. They have been hearing it in their livingrooms at a colossal volume, then they hear this tiny little sound peeking out from a silly little instrument on the stage which looks, to them, like an outdated piano and they wonder what's it all about.

"I have tried to circumvent this from happening, but it's entirely up to the person playing the records. You can't stand over them. You can put all kinds of instructions on the jacket but no one pays any attention to that.

"If harpsichord recordings are played at a loud volume, clavichord recordings are ridiculous! I knew that to get a distinction between the levels of the harpsichord and clavichord that I had to work out some sort of artificial means of doing it. When the record companies combine both instruments on the same record, they go by the general highest volume of both instruments. I then, start off with a harpsichord number which gives the home listener an opportunity to set the volume at the level he enjoys. Then, in relation to that, when the clavichord is introduced later, the volume is much lower. This helps some, but it is a very knotty kind of problem. I don't know what can be done about it except to train the listener and have the listener exposed to live harpsichord music.

"Another problem in recording involves the recording engineers. Often they will record much too close to the instrument. They have a good bit to learn in this respect.

"Of course, the public is much more aware of harpsichords today than they have been for a long, long time. Part of the reason is the use of the harpsichord in other than classical situations. The motion picture now uses the harpsichord freely. Tom Jones is an excellent example. Even I have played harpsichord for the films. I did the sound track for 'Hallelujah, the Hills'. You can't listen to an hour of commercials without running into the harpsichord two, three or four times. People may not always be aware that it is a harpsichord, but

(Continued on page 16)

The Harpsichord — 9

HARPISCHORD *of* NOTE



The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Purchase, 1953, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest.



This beautiful Italian instrument was made in Venice in 1540 by an unknown builder. Only the letters "Vi . . . ies" remain of the name. Smithsonian Institution calls the instrument a Polygonal Virginal; the Metropolitan Museum calls it a Spinettino; the University of Edinburg calls it a Pentagonal Spinet, Virginal or Spinetta, and Frank Hubbard refers to similar instruments as spinets. We will call it a Pentagonal Virginal since it has the same arrangement of keyboard, wrest plank, hitch pins, jacks and strings as a virginal and both shapes were known as virginals in the 17th century. (We reserve the name spinet for another type of instrument . . . fundamentally one with the wrest plank and tuning pins in front; behind the keyboard, and the strings

stretched diagonally.)

The name is not important, but the instrument is, for it is both one of the oldest keyboard instruments in the Metropolitan collection and also one of the best preserved. Additionally it is one of the very few keyboard instruments which the public is permitted to see at the museum.

The name board, which has no name, carries the words NON MI SONAR SITU NON HADEL BVO-NO. As seems to be the case so often with old instruments, the lettering is roughly done and poorly spaced. When compared with the superb craftsmanship of the rest of the instrument it appears to have been done by an inexperienced artist.

We can thank Eleonora d'Este, duchess of Urbino for this virginal. It was she who commissioned its construction in 1540. The inside of the instrument is inscribed: "Ordinata e fatta per Sua Eccellenza la Sigra Duchesa D' Urbino L'Anno di Nostra Salute 1540 e pagata 250 Scudi Romani." which gives the date, price and the fact that it was commissioned by Eleonora d'Este.

The Este family loved fine musical instruments and most of them played well. Eleonora's mother, Isabella d'Este was an excellent clavi-chord player. She was also an avid collector and kept a jealous count of the valuable instruments owned by her sister at the Sforze Court in Milan. She wanted to be able to claim these at her sister's death.

This pentagonal virginal is profusely decorated with a wonderful combination of carving, intarsia and certosino work. Ivory studs were also used to advantage. Even the jack rail is made up of layers of various woods. The sunken soundhole rose is of such detailed beauty and complexity that it will be featured full-page in a latter issue of *The Harpsichord*. For some reason the most elaborate roses are usually found on virginals and spinets, not harpsichords, and this rose is a case in point.

C/E-f" is the apparent compass.

(Continued on next page)

HARPSICHORD OF NOTE

(Continued from preceding page)

It has one 8' register and no hand stops. It is possible that there was, at one time, an outer case. The great majority of Italian virginals had protective cases. This case was of thicker and stronger material than the spinet and was usually decorated and fitted with legs.

The virginal was made somewhat on the order of a violin. The sides were very thin and vibrated along with the soundboard which was supported by a lining. Moldings were attached to the top and bottom of the sides in order to make them seem heavier than they actually were. At first glance it would seem the sides of the virginal shown here were about $\frac{3}{8}$ or even $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. They are closer to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch! A look at the protruding molding shows how deceptive decorative trim can be.

Soundboard thickness varied from builder to builder but no one has yet conclusive evidence of how variations were determined. Builders often felt that the secret of tone production was the way their soundboards tapered and they guarded this information

carefully. The jacks pass through the soundboard which requires exacting placement. The jack guide is built up of separate pieces, held together by long strips, and is glued to the underside of the soundboard.

There is practically no frame to the pentagonal virginal. It is built with a full bottom to help keep the sides from collapsing. At the right end, the liner upon which the soundboard rests, is made wider and of hardwood which acts as the wrest plank. There are no extra braces as in harpsichords. The soundboard usually had two small ribs on either side of the rose.

As it is easy to see, the plucking point of the pentagonal virginal is much closer to the center of the strings than is true of harpsichords. While the tone is perhaps a little weaker than that of rectangular virginals it is still an excellent sound and is undoubtedly one of the major reasons for their long popularity.

Douglas Barclay of Kansas City (a Charter member of this Society) has constructed a similar instrument from drawings and descriptions found in U. S. Government Bulletin No. 225. It is titled "Italian Harpsichord Build-

ing in the 16th and 17th Centuries." The booklet was written and researched by John D. Shortridge who is Associate Curator of the cultural history in the United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institution. Typical examples of Italian harpsichords from the Hugo Worch Collection are described in detail and illustrated. Also, the author offers an explanation for certain puzzling variations in keyboard ranges and vibrating lengths of strings of the Italian harpsichords. The paper is available for 20 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20401.



A detailed article on Mr. Barclay's pentagonal virginal (illustrated above) is planned for a future issue of *The Harpsichord*. ☺



A GLIMPSE AT THE EARLY PIANO

by F. H. Miller — Dorking, Surrey, England

On April 4, 1774, the Rev. Thomas Twining, Rector of St. Mary's, Colchester, in the county of Essex, wrote to his famous contemporary, Dr. Burney, as follows: "... I thank you heartily for all the trouble you have taken about my pianoforte. It arrived safe at the proper time, without being even much put out of tune by the jumble. I am much pleased with the tone of it, which is sweet and even; in the pianissimo it is charming. Altogether the instrument is delightful, and I play upon it *con amoré*, and with the pleasure I expected. If it has defects which a good harpsichord has not, it has beauties and delicacies which amply compensate, and which make the harpsichord wonderfully flashy and insipid when played after it; though for some purposes, and in some of my musical moods, though not the best I confess, I might turn to the harpsichord in preference. There are times when one's ear calls only for harmony, and a pleasant jingle; when one is disposed to merely sensual music, that tickles the auditory nerves, and does not disturb the indolence of our feelings or imagination. But as soon as ever my spirit makes, as soon as my heart-strings catch the gentlest vibration, I swivel me round incontinently to the pianoforte."

This was in the early days of the pianoforte and, although we cannot be certain, the instrument to which Mr. Twining was referring was in all probability a "square". His comments on the harpsichord may seem a little harsh, but those of us who have had the pleasure of hearing a well-preserved "square" of the period might well be inclined to agree with him.

Whether we do or not, and however great our affection for the harpsichord, I am certain that our appreciation of its special qualities can only be felt to the fullest by placing a good early "square" alongside it, and turning from one to the other as our moods

dictate. Much of the published keyboard music of that period, by such composers as Edelmann, Eichner, Schobert, Pleyel and even Haydn was intended for Pianoforte (or Fortepiano) or Harpsichord, but we cannot hear the effect intended by playing on a piano of today. Thin strings (bichord only), the light and shallow touch and small leather hammers of the early piano produce a quite different quality of sound — much nearer to that of the harpsichord itself, but, of course, with "soft and loud".

No one has yet (to my knowledge) started to make reproductions of late 18th and early 19th century square pianos, but fortunately many of these instruments still exist, and are well worth acquiring and restoring. Of course, the restoration has to be done with patience and knowledge. It is no use asking a craftsman used only to modern pianos to do the work. However, the necessary information is available and, armed with this, a skilled amateur should not have too much difficulty. So look around and see what you can find.

My own small personal collection of antique keyboard instruments includes a "square" by Longman and Broderip, of 26 Cheapside, London, dating from c. 1790. It is of five octaves compass, F-F, bichord throughout, except for the lowest bass strings, which are single but lightly overspun. The hammers are small and are covered with leather, which no doubt has hardened with age. The touch is shallow, but expressive, and its thin silvery quality of tone carries remarkably well. Anything from Bach to Mozart played on it comes off equally satisfactorily.

As the years passed, the square piano became a little larger — its compass extended first to 5½ octaves (the "additional notes" of Beethoven) and then to 6. Later still the compass was increased to 6½ and even 7 octaves, but by this time the frame had

been strengthened by an iron plate to cope with thicker strings, and the characteristic "early" tone began to be lost. But these were musically still charming instruments and I personally would rather have a late "square" than none at all.

There were many makers of "squares" in early 19th century London, most of them with their workshops in or within hailing distance of Soho and they must have had a considerable export trade. So it must still be possible to find good examples of instruments by Broadwood, Kirkman, Ganer, Astor, Green, Clementi and Tomkisson (to mention only a few) in America. What better service could one render to a future generation of musicians than to rescue and restore one or more of these beautiful instruments? ☺

Hilda Jonas Harpsichord Festival Scheduled

Announcement has just been made by the Ohio State University College of the Arts that the 5th Annual Hilda Jonas Harpsichord Festival is scheduled for Put-In-Bay, Ohio from August 17 through August 23.

Miss Jonas, who has studied with many notables, including Wanda Landowska and Rudolf Serkin, originated the harpsichord workshop with the assistance and cooperation of Dr. McClure of Ohio State University. The theme of this year's workshop is "The Variations" and will center around Bach's Goldberg Variations. Highlight of each festival is the concert given at the Put-In-Bay Town Hall the last night of the workshop. Last year Concertos for both 3 and 4 harpsichords were featured.

A variety of accommodations are available. For information about the Jonas Harpsichord Festival write to Ohio Music Camp, Ohio State University School of Music, 1899 N. College Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

The Harpsichord — 13

GO FOR BAROQUE

(Continued from page 2)

First of all your Editor has been on a business trip for more than two months and second, we are in the process of moving the office into a real office building which one of our members has made available to us. We will have much more about this move later on. It is a big step for the Society and we hope it will help in the day-to-day operation of the Society and the publication.

We have received many requests to publish music for the harpsichord. And if things go as planned, we will have an original piece of clavichord music, written by contemporary composer-teacher Mary Boutilier, in our next issue. The piece is an experiment which most readers will find very interesting.

Our advertisers are growing with each issue. We have a fine ad from Clavis Imports on page 16, an ad from Broude Brothers, Ltd on 20 as well as our expanding Baroque Bazaar advertisers. We hope, that if our advertising keeps expanding, we will be able to increase the size of The Harpsichord.

We also proudly announce two Sustaining members with this issue! It is through these two grants that we will be able to publish our first "Who's Who". Our deepest appreciation to Dr. George Sargent and Mr. Robert T. Volbrecht.

John Brueggeman

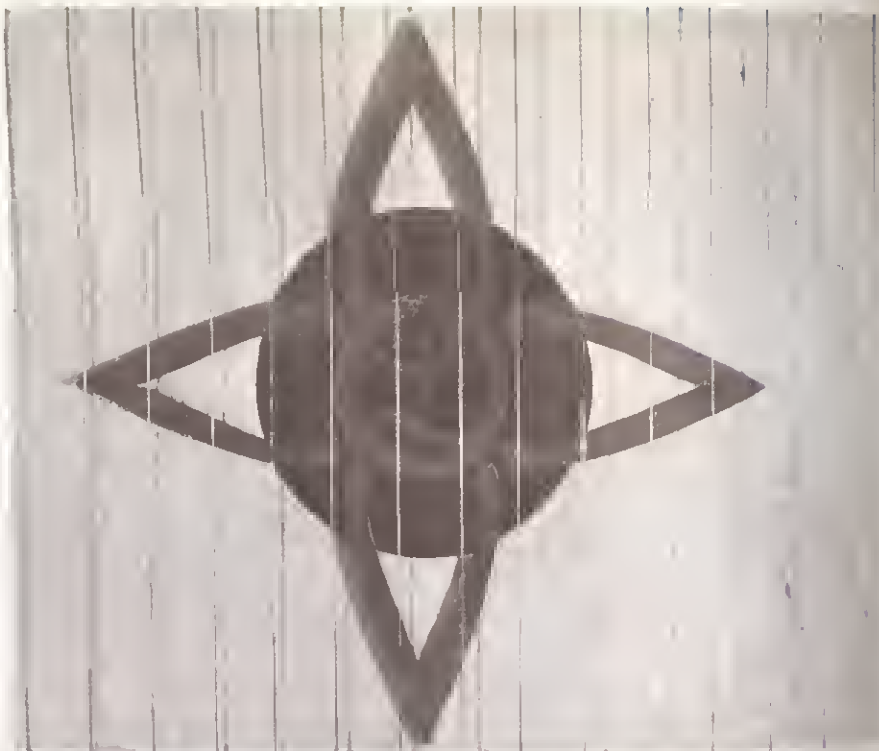
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Harpsichord Maker

14 — The Harpsichord



THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES

by William Layne

How does one design a rose when he has never seen a rose, or even a good illustration of one? I was confronted with this problem when building my harpsichord kit. Since I did not know what solutions other builders had used, there was no inclination to imitate theirs, and the result is different from any I have seen or heard of since.

As the harpsichord's Danish Modern outer case is made of teak, it was desirable to make the rose of teak also. The rose was sawed from a piece of teak plywood about one-tenth of an inch thick, and is glued to the soundboard over the tone bole. Commercial plywood is available in only a strictly limited range of woods and thicknesses, so it was necessary to make the plywood by gluing three pieces of 1/28" veneer together. (A wide range of veneers and hardwoods is available from Craftsman Wood Service Company, Chicago; and Albert Constaine & Son, New York.)

After spreading white glue on the three pieces of veneer they were stacked with the grain direction of

adjacent pieces at right angles. Waxed paper was placed above and below the veneer stack, the assemblage was then placed between two boards and the whole sandwich was clamped all around with a number of C-clamps. After the glue had set, the outer boards and waxed paper were removed and the newly-formed plywood allowed to complete its drying.

After the plywood was thoroughly dry it was placed between two pieces of 1/8" poplar the same length and width as the plywood and a full-size line drawing of the design was glued to the outer surface of one of the poplar pieces. Then a number of holes, spaced one-half inch to one inch apart, were drilled through the sandwich with a cut-off straight pin, and very small brads were driven through the holes and bent over on the back side. The holes were all located in the waste portion of the design. Then the design was carefully sawed along the lines of the drawing through the whole sandwich using a jeweler's saw. The poplar blinds effectively prevent any trace of splintering during the sawing. ☺

May June July 1969

PHRASING, ARTICULATION AND HARPSICHORD CONSIDERATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

By Michael Civiello

Contemporary composers have posed new problems with their use of harmony, melody and rhythm. The changes in these elements have consequently altered phrase structure, recognizable melodic and rhythmic patterns and slur groups. A performer is compelled to develop a new consciousness toward these elements as well as toward the import of a work. This can only be accomplished through study and instruction.



Recognition of phrases is perhaps the most difficult problem because of the loss of diatonic cadential patterns. The term "phrasing" should refer to its derivative — the phrase. Phrasing is the manner in which the phrases are constructed. Traditional music has separated phrases, elided phrases, etc. Contemporary music does not fit these patterns, but phrases are present.

The articulation of phrases and slur groups (incorrectly called phrasing) is another problem. Articulation of, or within, the phrase is important in that it disrupts or leads the rhythmic movement through the phrase, thereby developing the overall patterns of tension-release in the phrases and sections of the work.

To discuss phrasing and articulation in writing is frustrating because musical examples with verbal communication are needed. In some articles the mention of phrasing and articulation is evasive because of reciprocal use of the terms. I refer interested readers to *Phrasing and Articulation* by Hermann Keller.

Marjery Halford has made a
May June July 1969

statement concerning the "silence of articulation" which she says "... is of such great importance in harpsichord playing. These silences are breathing spaces which produce the proper phrasing, nuances and subtle suggestions of expression which literally lie beyond the capacity of the harpsichord to produce".‡ This statement should have ended after the word "expression." The complete statement contradicts itself; it does not follow that the "silence of articulation" can be so important when it, supposedly, is not characteristic of the instrument. On the contrary, it is the performer's technique and interpretation in deciding how much and where the articulation is to be applied that make the harpsichord expressive. The harpsichordist is, however, limited to the devices of rubato, agogic accent, legato, staccato, the slur and non-legato; all of these are essential to have at one's command.

There are many technical eccentricities that any instrumentalist must allow his instrument and the harpsichord is certainly a close first here. One factor that enters into both touch and articulation on the harpsichord is the speed of the key release. The characteristic clatter of several returning jacks and the counter rhythm of the clatter can help or detract from the rhythm of the passage. The key release controls this movement; whether or not the finger is on the key when it rises is a consideration.

The plectrum material also affects touch and articulation. The nylon plectra are less sensitive to touch and less assertive sounding than delrin. A different sound can be produced with delrin by not striking the key, but by depressing it to the breaking point and then carrying it through. This difference will make an appreciable change of quality over a movement or for even a full chord. My unqualified acoustical explanation for this is that due to the decreased plucking speed of the plectrum, the string amplitude is less which produces an overtone change.

Nylon won't produce this as much because it is more pliable than delrin.

Traditional harpsichord music occasionally requires the use of these and other harpsichord idiosyncracies, while some contemporary composers frequently utilize these characteristics for their effects. Such works as the Pinkham *Partita* and the Tchernepin *Suite* are idiomatic to the harpsichord and require the varieties of touch and articulation in order to sound. The works for piano or harpsichord can have them applied, but their use may not be inherent in the work.

A statement by Fernando Valenti is an appropriate summation: "I think you should have a musical idea, then fight like hell to get it out of the instrument."†

‡ Halford, Marjery; *Making the Harpsichord Sound Good*, CLAVIER: Vol. 8, No. 1, Jan. 1969; p. 11.

† INTERVIEW with Fernando Valenti; *THE HARPSICHORD*: Vol. 2, No. 1, Feb. Mar. Ap., 1969; p. 6. ☺

CORRECTION

It has been brought to our attention that Bjarne B. Dahl first visited the Broman harpsichord illustrated in our last issue in June of 1957, not 1967 as reported. Even though he has visited the instrument several times since 1957 most of the data he acquired was during 1957. Mr. Dahl writes: "In 1957 I was doing parallel work in research along with Raymond Russell and Frank Hubbard who were unknown to me at the time! When Russell's publication came on the scene in 1958 I was surprised to find that the basic data and photos I had collected correlated almost precisely with Russell's. Russell's book is so superb, to the point and so complete, I have given up all thought of my own publication."

We are most fortunate that Mr. Dahl has consented to write additional articles for *The Harpsichord* and you will be seeing his by-line in the not too distant future. HLH

KIPNIS

(Continued from page 9)

they remember and recognize the sound. There are many people performing on the harpsichord nowadays and many more owning harpsichords. There are also a staggering number of harpsichord builders. I don't mean just the kit builders, but professional builders. And harpsichord recordings are appearing in ever growing numbers. In the New York Musicians Union book there are between thirty and thirty-five harpsichords listed!

"In the early days of Landowska's career, to play the harpsichord was a very strange thing to do. I think even when Kirkpatrick started in the early thirties, perhaps even in the forties, that this was considered an unusual instrument. And now, while they may not have heard the instrument in person, they do recognize what it is. And age is of no importance. Young people take to it immediately. My son, who is five, thinks that there are only harpsichords. He knows that there are such things as pianos, but these are some strange instruments. As far as he is concerned there should be a harpsichord in every home. And I agree with him!"

HARPSICHORD: You own both a clavichord and a harpsichord. Have you any preference?

KIPNIS: "I think I prefer them each to themselves. There are quite

a few pieces which can be played quite effectively on either one. The best example of this is the Well Tempered. There is an Adagio in G which I recorded as part of the Bach harpsichord-clavichord album and this, to me, is definitely a clavichord piece. You may play the notes on a harpsichord but you can't get the nuances. I started with harpsichord and later decided that it would be very nice to have a clavichord so I could play at home when the harpsichord was downstairs in the car. In other words, I felt it would be a good practice instrument. Also, I knew from all the reading I had done that this was an exceptional instrument for training the fingers. And it has certainly been good training. However, I find it less good as a practice instrument if used as a substitute for the harpsichord.

"I have always said that playing the harpsichord is like playing on an uncooked egg as far as the finger action is concerned. You can not hit it heavily. You must treat it with care. With the clavichord, it is like playing on the same uncooked egg, but with the shell off and only a thin membrane between you and a mess! Approach the instruments with that mental picture in mind. If you work at it and have any natural talent at all you will, in time, feel at home with both instruments. From there you can go as far as you want to go."

Igor Kipnis

John Challis Scheduled

The next interview features John Challis, considered by many the most important (and controversial) harpsichord builder in America today. Our visit takes us into his shop as well as his beautiful home. He tells us some revealing things about harpsichord construction. ☺

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From LONDON

by Hugh Boyle

A new gallery has recently been opened at the Victoria and Albert Museum which is in many ways quite unique. Its main purpose is twofold. First, to house and display the museum's historically important collection of rare and beautiful musical instruments — but also, to enable some typical examples of these instruments to be heard once more in the performance of music of their times, after having been discarded and neglected for so many years in this capacity.

It was indeed fortunate that the instrument makers of the past took such great pride in the quality of their craftsmanship, and lavished, in the form of rich ornamentation, so much affection on their instruments as to justify their existence purely as works of decorative art. For it was this virtue alone that first gained these instruments a sanctuary in the galleries of the Victoria and Albert Museum; helped them to survive through what was — at least for them — a long and severe musical depression; and finally, made possible what might otherwise have been denied to us — the joy that their music is able to bring us today.

The museum's collection is particularly rich in 16th century keyboard instruments — which are extremely rare possessions. Besides the virginals which belonged to Queen Elizabeth, there are four Italian spinets and two superb Italian harpsichords of the same period, including the earliest dated harpsichord in existence, the Jerome (No. 1) of 1521. Among the other keyboard instruments of historical importance there

is a harpsichord which may possibly have belonged to Handel.

The more decorative of the instruments in the new gallery are displayed in chronological order, on a disc-like platform, facing inwards, in a completely irregular pattern of showcases — the remainder of the smaller instruments being kept in pull-out frames where they are normally out of sight. The purpose of this arrangement is to avoid unnecessary confusion and fatigue to the ordinary visitor — caused by allowing too many things to be on view at once — while, at the same time, leaving all the instruments freely available to those who are sufficiently interested to seek out the appropriate frames and pull them out individually for themselves. The care and preservation of all these instruments is entrusted to Peter Thornton, who conceived and designed the whole scheme.

A completely new and up-to-date catalogue of this collection has now been produced in two volumes and is published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Each of these volumes contains not only a large number of photographs and interesting details of the 50 or so keyboard, and 200 or more other instruments, but incorporates also a substantial amount of fresh information concerning them. Including, for instance, the recognition that some of the earlier keyboard instruments must have had their original pitch raised at some later date.† The catalogue is arranged and listed as:

Vol. I Keyboard Instruments by Raymond Russell.

Vol. II Non-Keyboard Instruments by Anthony Baines.

Although these instruments are not allowed to be touched, and can not therefore be heard 'live' (as can those of the Russell Collection in Edinburgh, the Fenton House Collection, here in London, and several others both here and on the Continent) nevertheless, some 20 selected snatches from B.B.C. recordings of

them have been made available to the general public by means of a kind of 'jukebox' situated in the gallery on which visitors can pick their choice by dialing the appropriate number. The complete keyboard recordings can be obtained from the museum's catalogue stall in the form of two LPs. These are:

Musica Rara MUS 70, Early Keyboard Instruments, and

Musica Rara MUS 71, Early Pianos.

The instruments in this collection most likely to interest our members would, I believe, be the Baffo Harpsichord, of 1574, and a spinet constructed in Italy — known generally as 'Queen Elizabeth's Virginals' — dating probably from the latter half of the 16th century.

Giovanni Baffo, of Venice, was one of the greatest of harpsichord makers and this particular instrument is an exceptionally fine example of his handiwork. The workmanship of the mechanical parts and concealed structure is faultless. Most of the jacks are original and are still a perfect fit in their guides.

The Italian spinet is also a very fine instrument. It is in very good condition and has a much quieter action than the normal Italian instrument of this period. The reason for the latter, as I discovered by consulting John Barnes, was that the jack guides had been lined with leather — this refinement having presumably been added later, in England — possibly in the 17th century.

The soundness and consistency of these early keyboard instruments was confirmed recently in a broadcast on the new gallery by Madeau Stewart of B.B.C. Sound Archives who, in summing up, observed that: "The interesting part about recording all these instruments was not simply hearing them come to life again, but rediscovering how reliable they are. On recording sessions we had no

(Continued on page 18)

The Harpsichord — 17

FROM LONDON

(Continued from page 17)

problems of mechanical failure. Although John Barnes was always present throughout, he was able to relax and become invaluable in the tricky business of turning over. Tricky, because music stands on many of the

instruments were too frail for heavy modern volumes, or the music itself — often photo-copies of British Museum treasures — was floppy.”

† See, John Shortridge, ‘Italian Harpsichord Building in the 16th and 17th Centuries; in Bulletin No. 225 of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington,

D.C. Also, John Barnes, ‘Pitch Variations in Italian Keyboard Instruments’, in the Galpin Society Journal, Vol. XVIII, 1965, pp. 110-116.

Hugh Boyle
London

ANCIENT CASTLE USED FOR HARPSICHORD PARTY

by Theodore Mix

Have you ever thought of renting a castle for your 100th birthday party? The firm of J. C. Neupert, makers of fine harpsichords and clavichords did just that last August when the firm reached the magical age of 100.

The firm was founded in 1868 by Johann Christoph Neupert whose three sons later headed it. Of these, Julius Neupert, now 91, lives in Nurnberg and still takes an active though limited interest in the firm. Each of these three men had one son, and these three sons are now the active owners.

The beautiful Schloss Atzelsberg in Erlangen near Nurnberg, Germany was the location of the party and it was attended by people from all over the world. The Burgomeister of Nurnberg and the Finance Minister of Bavaria were among the German dignitaries. At least 14 countries were represented amongst the guests.

An elaborately planned bus system collected invited guests at points in Nurnberg and Erlangen and carried them to the castle where they were greeted with champagne and a welcome from the three Neupert cousins; Arnulf, Alfred and Hanns, third generation of Neupert's directors, and the two sons of the latter, Wolf-Dieter and Helmut Neupert.

Immediately following short introductory words, an excellent recital by Henriette Barbé, the celebrated harpsichordist from Switzerland, took

place in one of the salons. In a few of her renditions, she was accompanied by Martin Zurcher, a noted recorder player from Switzerland.

Lunch was then served, with guests dining in several beautifully appointed dining rooms. This was followed by a stroll through the spacious gardens and grounds, each to his own desire. After returning to the castle, the guests were treated to another program of music by Mme. Barbé and Mr. Zurcher.

Coffee, wine, liquer, champagne, beer and light refreshments closed the birthday party and the guests departed in an old-world aura of having enjoyed a birthday party much as it might have been given 100 or more years ago for those of note and distinction. Mentioned at the party were the many honors Neupert has enjoyed over the years. This included the recent restoration of Beethoven's piano by invitation of the State of Austria. This instrument is now located in the Beethoven Memorial in Vienna.

Of great interest was the announcement that the largest collection of historic harpsichords in the world, the Neupert collection, has finally found a home for display in the Germanic Museum in Nurnberg. Dr. John Henry van der Meer, eminent authority on ancient keyboard instruments has been retained by the museum as Director.

The Neupert collection, which represents a hundred years of collect-

ing instruments of interest and note, was housed in Nurnberg until the 2nd World War when it was quietly moved to Bamberg and stored. This move proved to be most judicious since old Nurnberg, where the collection had been located, was almost completely destroyed by bombs late in the war.

Since that time, the collection had remained in storage. The effort and space required for its display and maintenance was too great a task for a private firm.

In 1965 the State of Bavaria purchased an enormous and historic complex of buildings in hope of housing the entire collection and displaying it under the State auspices. Difficulties in terminating the leases of tenants of the buildings delayed the accomplishment of this dream and finally the Germanic Museum was chosen to house and exhibit the collection.

Many of the instruments are already on display and plans are to have the complete collection available by mid 1969. The settings for these priceless instruments are ideal and show each piece off to great advantage. A number of Ruckers and classic examples of other famous builders make this the most interesting and rewarding experience possible for those interested in seeing both the best of old harpsichord building as well as its evolution over the centuries.

Theodore Mix
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INAUGURAL CONCERTS — Some Reflections and Recollections

by Hugh O'Meagher



Although every Presidential Inauguration viewed from long range, seems virtually the same, when considered in detail there appears a number of striking differences. Having played at six Inaugurals, I find that each, indeed, has a personality, or a distinct quality which makes it an unique event decidedly unlike any of the others.

My personal experiences cover a sizeable number of years beginning during World War II when I played with a small group of Spoloists from the United States Navy Symphony-Band at the White House during the fourth term of President Franklin Roosevelt. The mood prevailing in Washington at that time was one of sober gaiety; the Roosevelts were not a musical family; the war was drawing to a close and the temper of the Nation's Capitol was one of hope.

When Truman was Inaugurated (after finishing F. D. Roosevelt's fourth term) the whole climate of Washington had altered radically since my previous Inaugural. To begin with, I was no longer in the service, and there was a feeling of freedom and relaxation and good-humor that seems only possible, and quite naturally so, in years of peace. President Truman is a man who not only knows, but likes and plays good music . . . he paid close attention to our Inaugural Concert.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower first came to the Presidency, the country was again involved in war . . . this time in Korea. Washington, D. C. again, was a serious and sober

city for the Inaugural ceremonies. Eisenhower, not a particularly musical man, paid token attention to the music of the long ceremonies. The re-election of President Eisenhower however, marked the end of inaugural concerts embracing random-choices from the existing repertoire. Two years prior, Richard Bales, the famous conductor of the Orchestra at the magnificent National Gallery of Art, had added to a growing list of diversified original works. The one in question is called "The Republic" and is quite a remarkable assemblage of patriotic music by various composers. All of the formal compositions of this work are the products of composers dating from shortly before the Revolutionary War, to just after the War of 1812, when the American States actually gained, at last, their hard-won independence. Bales' accomplishment lies in his ability to create an intelligent and historically-important work (Columbia issued it as a very special 'album') by transposing several of the disparate items, and in casting many in colorful modern orchestrations from their original simple settings . . . (mostly for the Pianoforte). As an example, the piece which constitutes the Overture was originally a "Battle Sonata" for Harpsichord or Pianoforte by James Hewitt. This large a collection representing a sampling of composers from Francis Hopkinson to Samuel Webbe, poses a very difficult problem: how can they be assembled with a continuity which will at the same time expose the variety of styles, and avoid becoming merely a bewildering pot-pouri? Bales' solution proves remarkably apt: he intersperses spoken words (viz. the 'Preamble' to the Constitution) with 'secco' recitatives. Several items rise to a dramatic intensity which seems never to fail with the audiences we have played these for: the last four Inaugurals, the Assembly of the State of Virginia, the Charlottesville Centennial, etc.

John F. Kennedy's Inauguration witnessed a more intense awareness of the part of The Fine Arts in a Presidential Inauguration. The Secret Service rarely permits the President to attend ceremonies indoors because of rigid security regulations. The President *can* insist on over-riding these regulations, but he rarely does. With Bales' "The Republic", the most important of the Inaugural Concerts moved indoors: to the National Gallery of Art. President and Mrs. Kennedy accepted the invitation to attend the Inaugural Concert at the National Gallery, but in the end other matters became so pressing, the President was forced to decline and only the First Lady attended with many notables. In no other Inauguration I have attended, has more attention been lavished on The Arts. Washington was the scene of a vast and overwhelming demonstration of the popularity of President Kennedy.

When President Lyndon Johnson was inaugurated, the scene in the Nation's Capitol again brought evidence of a President's popularity. Probably partly due to his able conduct when his predecessor was assassinated, President Johnson surely had the favor of the serried masses gathered in Washington for the festivities. After the tragic events in Texas, the Secret Service naturally tightened their restrictions on the President's public appearances. The First Lady, however was in attendance. The atmosphere was festive, and we realized that sincere attention was being given to our music-making. The crowds in Washington were very large.

This year our Inaugural Concert was received by an enthusiastic audience, but again, restrictions of the Secret Service prevented our musically gifted President Nixon from attending. There was, again, an air of solemnity in the Inaugural proceedings. Once again our country is embroiled in war and the specter of inflation

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hangs above us. The crowds in Washington were noticeably smaller than previously. When I left the National Gallery after the dress-rehearsal for the Nixon Inaugural Concert, imagine my consternation as I stepped out into Constitution Avenue to hear chanting by hundreds, on hundreds, perhaps thousands of voices! As I crossed Constitution Avenue I realized that its jointure with Pennsylvania was jammed with an enormous parade of 'demonstrators'. They were chanting anti-war slogans and carrying all manner of signs and banners and posters, walking eastward on Pennsylvania towards the Capitol. I asked a Police Officer, the length of the parade. His reply was that it extended back west to approximately the location of the White House area. My car was parked north of Pennsylvania and I had to get to it and move it to another place where parking was permitted for a longer period. I decided to walk west, join the 'parade' and walk east with them, while working over to the north edge where I could leave them and get to my car. Suiting action to idea, I joined the marchers . . . wondering what I would do if one of them handed me a placard to carry! I decided I would take it, carry it for a distance, and then hand it to someone else before I left the marchers. After all, when you realize that every Presidential Inauguration is a different experience, how can you be sure you may not be carrying some placard in some future parade? Although still in some doubt as to the exact *raison d'être* of it all, I felt quite strange walking with these unorganized, but orderly marchers . . . and there seemed to be no menace involved. Finally finding myself on the northern edge of the marchers' parade, I left them and got my car where I parked it. I drove off by a circuitous route through the city, to my sister's home where I was to have dinner. A welcome thought, after that march.

Every Presidential Inauguration is an unique experience, and I realized on my ramble through Washington

that this last one, seemed to be the most bizarre so far. I look forward to the next, and hope it will find us a country at peace not only with the world at large, but with ourselves. ☺

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